

SPORTS VIEW
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attended

ow that the operation of the new stadium, and its filling of three important areas covering both codes, which filled to almost capacity, has been undoubtedly studied by the other sister counties, the way in which their grounds stand in relation to it must be causing concern.

The Southern venues most lived would be Limerick, with Park, Killarney, with Park, Ennis, interested in a secondary degree. Limerick has its limitations in the capacity of its stands is less than that of other three big Munster venues, and it is uncomfortable at anything below the 45,000 mark. Its big advantage, however, is that as 20,000 bookable seats—of them under cover, can be and were sold in advance, representing a profit of some £30,000, at prices charged for the recent years and collected the week prior to the fixture—so weather conditions would not affect "takings."

That is left is another 20,000 "seats" to be accommodated—confined to both goals; but yet commanding a view. A position in this position of the grounds sold for the Munster finals, at a total of £120,000 over the two Sundays. And what the crowds meant to the business life of Cork City is anybody's guess.

The overall accommodation Limerick's Pairc na nGael the best in the province outside Croke Park. At 15,000 seats, for admission to see the 1961 Munster final between Cork and Tipperary, on which occasion thousands more gained free mission.

The seating accommodation Limerick, 23,000, exceeds at of the new Cork stadium—but the Hogan stand is accommodates 1,100—and by the extent of its covered and bookable capacity.

The obvious development at Pairc na nGael would be an extension of the Hogan Stand down to the Greystones end of the pitch. That would give an extra 5,000 covered seating, adding that much to a capacity of the grounds making it adequate for requirements.

I would think that an extension of the Hogan stand to the under cover would be adequate, along with facilities for the booking of the remaining seating accommodation, plus improved toilet and other amenities.

SOCCER: Manager takes a cold, hard look at local attitudes!

FELTON SLAMS LIMERICK APATHY

'Game will die unless cash is injected from outside'

BY CHARLIE MULQUEEN

FEW WILL deny that League of Ireland soccer is going through a bad patch right now. Dwindling crowds and a diminution of interest have plunged even our strongest clubs into financial embarrassment. Cork Hibs., for example, looked to be one of the few capable of coping with the demands of the 1970s; now they are staring bankruptcy in the face.

Here in Limerick, our own League of Ireland club appears to be going from one mediocre season to another. There is no cash in the bank, and little likelihood of any. The once big Markets Field attendances have long since passed away.

The future is grim. But it is not hopeless. A chat this week with Manager Ewan Fenton convinced me of this. He is only too well aware of the problems that lie ahead—we will come to that in due course—but for one thing he is convinced that Limerick will do a lot better than last season and will play an amount of good football.

Fenton, 47, and owner of a successful School of Motoring in Cecil St., where his wife, Vera, is Ewan Junior, are vital cogs in the machine, is a deep thinker on the game of soccer.

I have often wondered why he continues to plough so much of his hard-pressed time into a game whose rewards grow smaller and smaller with the passing of each year. After our chat—in weather that led one to believe that the season was months away instead of a brief few weeks—I had the answer.

It is his love, his devotion, yes passion for football that keeps him involved with Limerick, ever hopeful that the corner can be turned and that once again the bright lights will shine at the Markets Field.

To listen to him speak about the game, you would honestly believe that soccer was the only worthwhile sport in the whole world. Which, of course, it isn't, especially in Ireland, where the fans—or rather the lack of them—have given their answer to the mediocrity dished up week after week in the Hogan Stand.

Fenton was born in Dundee near the east coast of Scotland and was kicking a ball about almost as soon as he could walk. At 9 years of age, he was playing in the first team and at 16 had his first taste of the professional scene in local leagues. Fenton returned to Dundee recently with an old friend himself just back from Canada and his sister organised a reunion of those players of '45 that gave him much pleasure.

FIVER A WEEK
He played one game at that time for St. Johnstone, who offered him terms of £5 and £3 a week and a guarantee that at that time of money was for a 16 year-old. The attraction was across the border in England and leading the race for the rich talents of Ewan Fenton were Blackpool and Manchester United.



"The Ewan Fenton School of Motoring" team this week. From left: Ewan Junior; in centre, Ewan Senior, and on right, Mrs. Vera Fenton. Ewan Senior will be hoping that he can steer Limerick A.F.C. on an equally straight course in the forthcoming soccer season.

one of the world's great players, but at Blackpool he was treated like everybody else and shouted at like everyone else," smiles Fenton.

Fenton was to spend six more happy years at Bloomfield Road, captaining Blackpool and earning the admiration of all for his skill and style before eventually moving for a short time to Wrexham in 1959.

In no time, however, he was lured to Limerick—surely the most significant, important and successful signing ever made by the club—and the rest is well known.

As a wing-half or centre-half, he guided Limerick through the 60s, bringing them to the unsuccessful FAI Cup final of 1965 and '66, in both of which they lost, once after a replay, to Shamrock Rovers.

A brief term as boss of Linfield in the Ulster League followed, but Fenton was back with Limerick again in 1970 and managed them to the historic FAI Cup triumph of 1971. Since then, however, things are not going anything like as well. The herds who followed the team in their glory five years ago have fallen away so dimly that on occasions last season it was possible to actually count the number of spectators at the Markets Field.

and to the benefit of the game in general. GONE
Fenton fears that the days of the crowds are gone forever. Edited highlights of English games have made people too critical of Irish football and Fenton has strong views on this.

"Thirty five minutes of the best English match of the day are sure to give great entertainment. But I remember RTE showing the whole of a match involving Derby County two years ago and it was so bad that at half time a few friends and I abandoned the telly and went playing golf."

If they showed edited highlights of Irish matches, properly filmed with electronic equipment, they would compare favourably with the English version," claims Fenton.

The crowds have dropped elsewhere Fenton points out. The great Bayern Munich average only 8,000; his old club, Blackpool, used to have a consistent "gate" of 38,000, now they are down to 7,000.

With the exception of two or three players, Limerick will have the same playing staff as last year. The manager is hopeful that they will do at least as well when they won the Bass League Cup and £800 of Bass money for a remarkable burst of high scoring late in the season, but he feels that they should do a lot better.

Webb or the others. However, while there are men like Fenton around, the future of Irish football is assured. One only hopes that his words will be heeded and that our soccer public—so ardent in their support when things are going well—will rally now to the cause in this time of dire need.

Waterford may be here on August 29

LIMERICK'S first competitive outing of the new season may be in the Munster Senior Cup against Waterford at the Markets Field on Sunday fortnight, August 29th, writes Charlie Mulqueen.

At their weekly meeting on Tuesday, Limerick agreed to a request from the Munster Council to play the game on that date, but it is subject to Waterford's agreement.

And if the match goes ahead on the 29th, it will upset the plans of Nenagh, who had arranged for some Limerick "guests" for their outing that day against Shamrock Rovers.

In the meantime, Limerick manager Ewan Fenton will complete the re-signing programme next week with the return from holiday of Kevin Fitzpatrick and Denis Lyne after illness.

GOLF: Jackie Harrington holds Irish team place

SELECTORS GO FOR YOUTH

BY CHARLIE MULQUEEN

IT'S GREAT to be young, especially if you are a low handicap golfer in Ireland. At least, that's the very understandable impression to take from the team for the Home International Championship to be played on the great Muirfield links in Scotland next month.

Certainly the words of Vincent Nevin on the day of his South of Ireland Championship triumph went unheard by the selectors. Nevin's view was that picking of youth for youth's sake was "not on."

"Youngsters should have proved themselves in the Championships before getting into the International team," was Nevin's opinion.

Well, believe it or not, only feet of the chosen chaos for Muirfield have won a major Championship and many have never made an impression in any.

Take 19-year-old Douglas Heather, for instance. In his two most recent Championships, the South and Close, he was eliminated in the first round. And never once has he seriously threatened to take a major title.

Neither, really, have Munstermen Tom Cleary and Noel Lehané, but this trio have one thing in common — youth.

Nor has Tipperary's 25-year-old Artnur Pierce exactly set the world alight, though he did reach the last eight of the National and the British, neither of which events attracted a particularly strong entry.

As against all that the selectors had a restricted choice, with men of the quality of Nevin not available, and standards generally at an all-time low.



Jackie Harrington, who first played for Ireland in 1958, is in the Irish team for the Muirfield Internationals. Arthur Pierce from Tipperary wins his first Irish cap.

RUGBY: All local clubs back in training

Munster selectors face busy start to season

BY CHARLIE MULQUEEN

AS WILL have been noted from our advertising columns over the past week or so, all our local rugby clubs have commenced training for the new season, which commences in the North Munster area on the very first day of September when Old Crescent play Galwegians at Rathbane and the under 20 League gets off to a quick start with four ties listed.

Even before all that, the coaching fraternity will have been at Rockwell College on August 28th and 29th and here the emphasis will be on the provincial under 23 squad, announced at the end of last season, and which is preparing to take on a Young Munster selection at Thomond Park on September 25th.

This game is being played as part of Young Munster's 27th anniversary celebrations. During the Rockwell coaching course, the selectors intend to name a senior panel as well and the Young Munster selection will come from this group, excluding of course, the provincial 23s, who will have first choice.

Dolphin also have jubilee celebrations this season, and as part of these a full Munster XV will take on a Dolphin selection on October 10th, so it promises to be a busy time for the selectors. However, they are more than pleased at this development, for all too often they have gone into the Interprovincial Championship without a game of any type under their belts.

The teams for the Munster trial on October 16th will be chosen the same weekend, and by the time the first Interpro — against Leinster in Dublin on Oct. 30th comes around—they should be well prepared.

own and Constitution, who clash at Thomond Park. On the same day, it will be the turn of Highfield and Dolphin at Musgrave Park. A week later, Old Crescent and Bohemians meet at Thomond Park and this effectively should leave eight survivors for second round action.

The second round is set for March 12th, 13th, 26th and 27th; the semi-finals for April 2nd and 3rd and the final for April 16th.

That all seems so far away yet, but already all five senior clubs in Limerick have advertised training sessions. The season gets longer and longer, and the break shorter and shorter, and while some may feel that this is a desirable trend, one wishes ardently that an improvement in standards would ensue as a consequence. But has it over the past few years?

SOCCER: Ladies final on Sunday

The Ladies' League of Ireland soccer title for the season will be decided on Sunday when table toppers, Limerick and Dublin Castle, meet at Jamesboro, kick-off 3 o'clock.

Limerick won the first meeting of the sides by 3-1 in Dublin, but have since dropped two points to Avengers, whereas "Castle" have won all their matches since. There is every promise of a thrilling battle between the sides.

THOMOND R.F.C.
The annual 7-A-Side for the above club will be held on Sunday, August 15 in Shelbourne Park, at 8.00 p.m. Will all junior players please note that training for the coming season has now commenced.
—M. Hartery, hon. sec. (w11-114 824)

Adare Manor Golf Club
Making one of his rare appearances on the fairways this season, Sean Crowe teamed up nicely with electrician Joe Neville to win the fourball stableford event last Sunday. It was an in and out display, one making up for the other's lapses to card 43 points.

Two points behind in second spot were Sean McMahon and Tony Clancy. They edged out the Willie Walpole and Vincent Moran on the back nine.

N.C.A. Notes
Last Sunday marked the 10th year of the Johnny Drumm memorial race in Castleisland. Limerick Road Club were among the many clubs who attended and together they provided an exciting days racing. Liam Hynes took second place in the u/14 while Edward Keehan took first in the u/16 race.

The Junior race was won by Denis Sweeney.

Late prepaids

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